Die Martis, 22. October, 1644.

IT is this day Ordered by the Commons Assembled in Parliament, That Mr *Ashurst*, and Mr *Gourdon*, do from this House give thanks to Mr *Vines*, for the great pains he took in the Sermon he preached this day at the intreaty of the Commons at St *Margarets, Westminster*; It being a Day especially set apart for a Publike Humiliation, and to desire him to Print his Sermon. And it is Ordered, that none shall presume to Print his Sermon without being authorized under the hand writing of the said Mr *Vines*.

H. Elsinge Cler. Parl. D. Com.

I appoint *Abel Roper* to Print this Sermon.

Richard Vines.

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THE POSTURE OF *DAVIDS* SPIRIT,

When he was in a Doubtful Condition.

OPENED

In a Sermon Preached before the Honourable HOUSE OF

COMMONS,

At *Margarets* Westminster, upon *October* 22. 1644. Being a Day especially set apart for a Publike Humiliation.

By Richard Vines, *Minister of the Gospel at* Wedding ton *in the County of* Warwick, *and one of the* Assembly *of* DIVINES.

Job 9. 22. *He destroyeth the Perfect and the Wicked.*

LONDON,

Printed by *J. M.* for *Abel Roper*, at the Signe of the Sun over against S. *Dunstans* Church in Fleet-street, 1656.

THE POSTULATE

To the Honourable House of Commons Assembled in Parliament at WESTMINSTER.

IF you please to read this Sermon, then bear in your minde that Aspect of Time under which it was born. The Season will render the Theme more Savory. It was when your United Armies were conceived to be neer Engagement into a Dispute, the Event whereof might have brought forth a Decretory Sentence upon the great Matter in Question. The Army wherewith you were to Encounter as in it self, it was not contemptible, so doubtless it did bear it self upon the Reputation of that Check lately given to You in the West: God was to be sought unto as the great and only Moderator,

we could be in no better posture of spirit, than to cast up all events with humble resignement of our All up unto God, so as to cast, yea to cast away our selves upon him: If it were out of date, as to the Publike (as it is not) yet it may well serve to the Meridian of any godly man in a doubtful or perplexed condition. The Lord continue to set marks of his Favour both upon you, and the Cause of his Churches: So Prays

Your Servant in the
Lord Christ,

RICHARD VINES.

A Sermon Preached before the Honourable House of Commons, upon their Extraordinary day of Humiliation, *Octob.* 22. 1644.

2 Sam. 15. ver. 25, 26.

And the King said unto Zadok the Priest, carry back the Ark of God into the City, If I shall find favour in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again, and shew me both it, and his habitation.

But if he thus say, I have no delight in thee, behold here am I, let him do to me as seemeth good unto him.

THe Religious King *Jehoshaphat* hearing that *Moab*, *Ammon*, and *Others* were in march against him, took the alarum, and first drew up his people into a posture of Fasting and Prayer, 2 *Chron.* 20. 1, 2, 3. and the answer from God was present, for the Spirit of the Lord came upon a man in the midst of the Congregation, *v.* 14. and he said, Hearken ye all *Judah*, and ye Inhabitants of *Jerusalem*, and thou King *Jehoshaphat*. Thus saith the Lord unto you, Be not afraid nor dismay'd by reason of this great multitude, *For the Battel is not yours, but Gods*. Ye shall not need to fight in this battel, set your selves *stand ye still, and see the salvation of the Lord* v. 15, 16.

Had I such a message from God unto you at this time, or such as that which *Paul* deliver'd to them in the Ship with him,

when they seemed to be at the last cast: *There shall not a hair fall from the ear of any of you*, Acts 27. 34. it would be a good *Breakfast* unto you; but such is the case of Gods people sometimes, that the Prophet being asked, *Can these Bones live?* answered, *O Lord God thou knowest*, Ezech. 37. 3. and they in Joel 2. 14. were at their *quis novit?* *Who knoweth if God will return, and repent, and leave a blessing behind him?* As *David* in this Text was at his *If*, and *If I shall find favour*, &c. But *if he say I delight not in thee*, &c.

The Text holds forth unto you the equal temperament, and the even poize or posture of a gracious spirit in a doubtful condition: He whose heart is steered by such a Compass, will ride even in all strait Seas whatsoever. I shall but briefly touch the historical part, because it hath not much influence into the Text.

Absalom had stolen the hearts of Israel into an Insurrection against his Father, the Conspiracy was both sudden and strong. *David* being in fear of surprisal, resolves to flee from *Jerusalem*. There was a hand of God in this, for he had told *David* beforehand, that for the matter of *Uriah* he would raise up evil against him out of his own house, 2 *Sam.* 12. 11. Now it is come to pass. The Priests and Levites would go with *David*, bearing the Ark of God: But whatsoever superstitious conceit the people had in bringing the Ark of God from *Shiloh* into the Camp against the Philistines; *David* had none, for he had learned by that example, that even the Ark might fall into Philistines hands, 1 *Sam.* 4. 3. Therefore he said to *Zadok*, carry back the Ark of God into the City; If I shall find favour in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again, and I shall see it and his habitation: τὴν εὐπρέπειαν αὐτοῦ, say the Septuagint; *The Beauty or Comeliness of it*: But if he say thus, I delight not in thee, *Here I am.* Where you find no discomposure or æstuations of spirit in *David*, no exclaiming against the impiety of his Son, or against the unkindness and ingratitude of Israel, no cursing of his stars, no bitter invectives against male-instruments, for these things are but the sludge that is usually cast forth by the overflow of distempered spirits.

But being of an equilibrious frame of spirit, lays himself down at the feet of God, whether he please to lift him up, or

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tread upon him, and in happy composure of himself comes to an anchor, even then when in regard of the event of the storm, he is at his *if* and *if*.

There are six things in the text which I might work upon, as affording seasonable matter for this time.

1. *David* resolves all into God, all events and issues, whether they be *pro* or *con*, for good or evil. *If I find favour, &c. but if he say thus, &c.*

2. He makes Gods favour to him the ground of Gods restoring him, or bringing him back again; *If I find favour in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me back again.*

3. He casts up the events both wayes, not being able to resolve the skales either one way or other. *If so then thus. If so then so.*

4. Every way he is resolved to be at Gods dispose, if the worst come that can come, yet saith he *Here I am.*

5. He states his happiness to consist in the fruition of God, and of his Ordinances. *He will bring me again, and shew me both his Ark and his habitation.*

6. His affliction or utter overthrow he expresseth by this phrase; Good in Gods eyes. *Let him do to me that which is good in his eyes.*

David resolves all events into God, whether *pro* or *con*, for good or evil. It could not be but a time of fear and grief unto him, had he looked to the clouds that were now thickning against him, God was now remembring his former hainous sins, and the people were up in armes, but he seems not to value or cast up that which made against him. So as to overthrow his faith or dependance upon God, as it is said of *Abraham*, *Rom.* 4. 19. ἐ κατενόησε, *He considered not.* His own body being dead, *&c.* that is, he vied not any improbabilities against God, so neither doth *David* consider things, either 1. To sink under the reckoning of such things as threatned him. The unkindness of his beloved son *cap.* 16. 11. *My son that came out of my bowels.* The defection of the people from him. *Cap.* 15. *ver.* 13. *The hearts of the men of Israel are after Abksalom.* The strength of the conspiracy, *ver.* 12. *the conspiracy was strong.* The wisedom and policy of the enemy, *ver.* 31. *Achitophel is* *Doct.* 1.

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among them. The suddenesse of the insurrection, *ver.* 14. *Arise, let us flee, for we shall not else escape.*

Or 2. to bear himself up by such things as might seem to make for him, *Jerusalem* adhered to him in their affections; the Priests, and Levites followed him, all the country thereabout wept for him: *ver.* 23. some faithful men were resolved to run the same hazard with him.

But whatsoever made either against him or for him as if the total sum on both sides had been but Cyphers set over against one an other. He resolves himself and all into God, if I find favour in his eyes &c. but if he say thus I delight not in thee &c. and if we view David well, we shall observe, that he was a man very happy in this frame of spirit. Doth *Michol* scoffe him for his zeal? I will be more vile saith he it is for God. Doth *Shimei* curse him? its God that hath bidden him. Hath he lost all at *Ziglag*? why yet he encouraged himself in God. Doth he flie before his son? he resignes himself up into the hand of God and indites a Psalm, namely the *third Psalme*, wherein is the first *Selah* in all the book of Psalmes, he had it seemes his *elevations* of spirit even at this time, what an excellent spirit is there in a godly man, he will be happy either in the fruition of God in peace: or in submission to God under calamity: he is *τετράγωνος*, hath a square side to fall upon be he thrown where or how the enemy can.

Use. That which I draw from this first head by way of use is to exhort you to resolve all your thoughtfulnes, cares, feares, doubts, questions upon God, What without use of means? No that's madnes, as we must sow to the spirit, so we must serve providence. God will not be tempted into miracles, *David* at this time had sent forth his espialls and intelligencers, he had a counter-mining *Hushai* in the counsels of the enemy: To have means in our hand, and not to use them, is *secure unbelief*, to use them and trust in them, is *proud unbelief*, and this is our epidemick sin, when we ride upon the arm of flesh then we gallop, when we are unhorst and smitten off that, then we lie despondent and cannot keep our legs, either we swell or sink, in our victory and successes hitherto God hath first shown us the vanity of our strength, and then made bare his own arm. Its even

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some losse to our selves, that he must distrain for his honour before we give it to him. In our successes we are proud rather then thankful, in our strokes we are rather broken then humbled, oh that we would cast away these bladders that help to drown us. The stile of man is *Alexander* or *Cæsar* hath gotten such a victory; But the stile of Scripture is, *The Lord discomfited Sisera before Barak* Judges 4. 15. 23. It was in the sword of the Lord and of *Gideon*. How poor an army was it with which the sword of the Lord was coupled, yet the victory was so examplary and signal, that it is made a pattern of an utter overthrow, *Isay* 9. 4. *as in the day of Midian* and again, do to them as to the *Midianites* Psa. 83. 9. and therefore as it is in Tragedies when the scene is come to such a paroxism, or such a knot as there seems to be no way out: then *Deus e machina*, comes in and heales all. So when things are doubtful desperate, inextricable, let God have your eyes, who can resolve every riddle and lead you out of the Labyrinth.

And there is reason for it, why at such a time as this, when there is so much at stake, you should resolve all your thoughts into God; because *events and issues are his*, duty is yours but issues are out of your Sphære. The Enemy may heat his oven but he cannot make the fire to burn the three children. *Balaam* may see up his Altars, and offer his sacrifices, but he cannot speak inchantments when he hath done all he can. It may be observed, that though the devil begin the tragedy with *Job*, and the Sabeans and Caldeans act in it, yet the end is not called theirs, it is τὸ τέλος κυρίου, *James* 5. 11. *The end of the Lord*, Whatsoever the premises may be, God drawes the conclusion, and that by another manner of inference than is in our mood and figure, we have this hope, that if God bring his people into the wilderness, he will also bring them out. *He will give them their vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope*, Hosea 2. 15. Let us not trouble our selves about that which is Gods work and not ours, let us not only look at the storm that threatens us, but to the steers-man, that sits at the helm to pilot us through all difficulties. *Noah* need not beat his head about a mountain or place for the Ark to rest upon, God will find an Ararat in the end.

He makes Gods favour to him, the ground of Gods restoring of him, or bringing him back again; *If I shall finde favour in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me back again.* Free grace is the refuge or the plea of the most righteous man. *Noah* was a just man, and perfect in his generations, and walked with God, and he found favour (saith the Text, *Gen* 6. 8.) in the eyes of the Lord, but some may say, why doth *David* appeal to favour? was he not innocent as to *Absolom*, who rose up against him; and as to them that rose up with *Absolom*? was there not sin in the adverse party? and godliness on his part? there is no question of it; but yet *David* had former sins which were now remembred to him, and he flies to meer grace and favour, and insists on that plea. It was favour and meer grace that put *Noah* into an Ark, when all the world besides was drowned; And what is it but Grace and Favour, that hath shut you up into an Ark of safety: Now when so many Families and Countries are brought under spoil and misery, and (which is not the least part of mercy) hath freed you from temptations of betraying either your lives or your consciences, and from being put to such disguisements of your selves as *David* was, when he changed his behaviour before the Philistines, 1 *Sam.* 21. 13, When God comes down in judgement against a people, there is ordinarily a reason to be found in themselves. The Marriners knew that the storm fell upon them for some cause, and therefore they went to the lot. And *David* when the famine did hang upon the Land from year to year, inquired of the Lord for what it was, 2 *Sam.* 21. 1. And for our own case, there is certainly a reason in our selves why the Sword is so long in our bowels, which we should search out upon these days of inquiry; for the smarting corrosive would drop off, if it did not find raw matter in the sore, which makes it stick fast, and eat into the quick. But now for the matter of our recovery, if ever God bring us again to shew us his Ark, and his Habitation, it must, it will be meer grace and favour, which grace is as powerful as it is free: Powerful, I say, to break through all obstructions, lay flat all Mountains of opposition, remove all impediments; and therefore it is said; If I find favour, he will bring me again; Jet *Absolom*, let *Aphi-*

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chiefest, let them all do what what they can. As some worthy Divines do assert grace to work irresistibly in a mans conversion, so may I assert it as irresistible in reducing and bringing back his Churches and people, from under the yoke of any enemy; God that works graciously, works omnipotently, and we know as little *Why* as *How*. This is that which doth most indear God to an unworthy sinner, and which doth most kindly melt the heart towards God again. Nothing doth so at once ravish the heart into admiration, and lay it low in self-confusion.

The Inferences which I draw from this Point by way of Use to our selves, are these;

1. Doth *David* now at this time when he might easily in his affliction see his former sins, the greatest that are recorded of him in the Scripture Fasten his eye upon the free grace of favour of God, as to which his restoring was possible? then why may not we, who are now under wrath for those many heynous national sins of ours, fly to this free grace of God, and therein likewise apprehend a possibility of our restoring, we are not shut out by our sins from free grace; that which takes away our iniquities, is not taken away by them, all the aggravations of our sin, do not prohibit our application to it, nor bind the hands thereof.

2. In that *David* builds not upon the ground of either the enemy his wickedness, or his own godliness and integrity, but derives his bringing back again from meer favour; it may teach us to cast away all false flattering arguments, which are the foundations of our proud hopes; one while we look on the prophaneness and wickedness of our enemies, and gather thence a kind of self-presumption, as though God might not use such scorpions to correct his own people withal; or not sell the *Israelites* into the hand of *Moab*, *Ammon*, Philistines, people worse than themselves; other whiles we applaud our own godliness and sincerity, and do not rest our expectations rather upon somewhat in our selves, than the free grace and favour of God to us.

David casts up the events both ways; If the Lord will shew me favour, then thus. If he say I delight not in thee, then so; *Deut.* 3.

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He could not resolve himself as touching the particular what God would do with him. And are not we in a like predicament at this time? doth not the Lord hold us in suspence? and is not the ship filled with water again, after that it hath been pumped almost empty? is there yet any certain *reliefe* of our estate? *David* might have said something for himself. Himself was a godly man, an honest party adhæred to him. The Priests and Levites were ready to follow him; and these things were good abodements; yet he saith, *if* and *if*, and so it may be with us; and therefore we ought to cast up events both ways, not to create doubtings in our selves, or distrust in God, but

1. To this end, That we may be fortified against the offence and scandal that may be taken, if we should see Christ Jesus led to be arraigned, and crucified, for what would become of us then, that have always expected a temporal and flourishing estate from him? Might we not for want of forecast of such a thing, come to warm our selves at the High Priests fire, and earn it full deerly, with a *non puturam*, or with the denial of our Lord.

2. To the end that we may know our own hearts, for he that feeds himself with confidence that he shall never be moved, shal never know his spirit what metal it is of, the *λογισμοι*, or reasonings of his heart will never be known unto him, for is it not plain enough, that many *Samaritans* that claim kindred of the *Jews*, whiles they prosper, do disclaim their acquaintance when they see them going down; are not many of us friends to the fortune of the cause, and not to the cause it self. Durst *Shimei* open his mouth against *David*, until he saw him flying? Put the case then both ways, and search your hearts, whether your compass will not vary at such a time, but still point to the true pole, and whether you can and will abide in the Ship, when it seems neer to break ing all to pieces.

And there is reason why we should cast up events both ways, not so much in respect of the cause it self, as in respect of our resolutions and standing to it, for the cause of God and of Religion will prosper, and will swim out of all waters; of that we have no doubt, though the *vision be yet for an appointed time*. Though God drive with *Abraham* until the date of his bo-

body be out, yet the promise shall beget *Isaac* out of a dead root; and if there shall not be left an Israelite to rescue the Ark of God out of the Philistims hands, the Ark shall rescue it self, and come home alone.

This is our confidence as concerning the cause of God in it self, and as touching our selves. God hath not left us hopeless for he hath a great harvest of his faithful people in this Land, and no Husbandman ever laid his field fallow, while the corn was yet standing upon the ground, untill he had inned his crop, but yet there is reason why we should cast up both events.

The first reason, I shall gather up into three heads. *Reason* 1.

1. The sins we lie in and under. 2. The unpreparedness that is in us to close with God, his way, his truth. 3. The ill symptomes that put forth themselves in us.

1. The sins we lie in and under, and first that masse of National sin, which hath been gathering into a heap for fourscore years together and upward, sins of all kinds under the Gospel, and against the Gospel, Idolatry, oppression, abuse of plenty and peace, as the Apostle saith of the workes of the flesh, *Gal.* 5. 19. *They are manifest which are these, and such like.* So I say of the sins of this Nation, their aggravations are great, themselves are great. If I should go about to number them, I must adde an *et-cætera* at the end, as the Apostle doth, and these are they which may justly put in a caveat, or a *notwithstanding* in our way, as the sins of *Manasses* did to the Reformation made by *Josiah*, 2. *Kings.* 23. 26 *Notwithstanding the Lord turned not away from the fierceness of his great wrath*; But then secondly our *wilderness-sins* threaten us much. For as it was not Israels *Egipt* sinnes which shut them out of *Canaan*, and held them so long in the Wilderness, but their Wilderness-sins; so they are our Wilderness sins, that presage ill to us, those I mean that are upon us, since God came down to plead with us face to face, and to bring us upon the way, and they are our want of sound Humiliation and brokeness of heart; for though we be broken yet we are not humbled: we are broken in our families, in our estates; The Kingdom is broken with our sins, and with the sword, but our hearts are not broken for our sin. We are as weary of our fasts, as of our wars: our solemn dayes are wan-

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tonized with curled, bare and spotted pride to this day: our sackcloth is grown into a fashion and form, and by many laid aside, the sword drawes forth our blood, because sin drawes not forth our teares: surely God hath an answer ready to that question; *Wherefore have we fasted, and thou seest not? Wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledg?* Isay 5. 8. 3. O that the Land would own its own sins! for though we can all cry, *It is sin*, yet when we should come to particulars, Then it is with us as with *Josephs* brethren: *Thou didst it*, and *Thou didst it*. The serpent said she: the people saith *Saul*: the people saith *Aaron*; We all acknowledg that there is sin amongst us, some where in the general, no where in particular: the people lay the blame on the Magistrate, the Magistrate on the people, and so our sins are never found at home; let us survey our selves and deale impartially. Are not self ends served upon the publike calamities, by such as come to the common scarre fire, not to quench it, but to fish for what they can get? Is there not a great neglect of personal reformation, even by such as cry for reformation Ecclesiastical? Is the power of godliness sought by them who call for purity of Ordinances? is not charity cold? I might call it Justice toward those that have drained their own wells dry, and cannot now get water to quench their thirst? are there not delayes and obstructions of Justice? are there not miscarriages in inferiour officers and instruments that are too sharp bitten, and prey for themselves under colour of service to the State? And may not the Lord renew that old saying: *For three transgressions, and for four I will not turn away the punishment of your Land*, Amos 1. *ver.* 3. 6. *&c.*

2 The unpreparedness that is in us to close with God, his way and truth, many think it religion enough to cry *King and Parliament*, with them the power of godliness lies under as great scorn and disrelish as ever, and though we have ingaged our selves by Covenant, yet is that Covenant made by many but as it were *a fast and loose knot*, or a meer *Shibboleth* of distinction between party and party, how many are willing to compound for such a Reformation as may serve self-interests, or politique respects, making their own ends the standard of Reformation, not the word or glory of God? What fear is there in many of

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the strictness of it? What jealousie least it should clip the wings of civil authority, and power, being startled at the name of *jus divinum*, as Herod was when he heard of one that should be born King of the Jewes, a vain fear. For he that saith by me Kings reign, doth not by his Gospel pull them down *date Deo* and *date Cæsari* are no ways inconsistent.

The Symptoms that are upon us, are very ill abodements, as namely, the divisions and sidings in matter of Religion, which is first turned into a kind of Philosophy of opinions, and then divided into parties and sects, as the old Philosophers were; After the great and general deluge of corruption of Doctrine, and superstition in worship, we are fallen into the confusion of Languages. And then again, what emulations in Officers that have great command? as if they had an *Alexander* or a *Cæsar*, or a *Pompey* in their breasts, making too much ado about punctilios of honour? what dissentions in the country between Committees and Commanders, the one accusing the other for plowing away a furrow of his land, and the other recriminating the like, and whiles they come up hither to contest the difference, the Plow stands? what should I speak of driving of designs, and of the carriage of many in this cause, meerly by interests, and not by principles, which kind of men can never be firm, for interests will make any man loose and uncertain; He hath the byas in his Pocket, which he can put off and put on, as the mark lies, nothing makes men firm but principles, for such a mans byas is within the bowl, especially if his principles carry him to God as well as you, for otherwise he will not be always yours. Now if all these things be laid together, they make good reason why we should cast up both events.

The ways and dispensations of God towards us are so dark, as by them we are not able to discern clearly of his particular mind or thoughts, as touching the issue or event, when we are (as we think) at shore and ready to land, there comes a gust and waves us back into the deep again. The Ark is carrying to *Jerusalem*, and there falls out a breach upon *Uzzah* and stops the work. The war hangs long upon us, and who knows where or when the Tragœdy shall end. How long have the

German Churches, (where the first day-break of reformation began) been under a thick cloud, and many a time when they have seemed to see land, they have been driven back again with cross winds. Thus do the ways of God, like *Meanders*, run under ground. He hides his paths and his ends, and he is in the thick darkness; so that we see his goings: but are as much to seek for the meaning of his dispensations, as the boy was that ran to fetch *Jonathans* Arrows, whereby he made discovery to *David*.

This we know, that God hath not pinned his Ordinances to the freehold of a Land, Nation, City: therefore he saith, *Jer.* 7. 12. goe and see what I did to *Shiloh* where I set my name at the first, and what was that which he did to it? *Psal.* 78. 60, 61. He forsook the Tabernacles of *Shiloh*, the Tent that he had pitched among them, and delivered his strength into captivity, and his glory into the enemies hand, whence it may be affirmed that though God do not altogether remove his name from the Israelites, yet he may change the place thereof, from *Shiloh* to *Jerusalem*: and so though he do plant his Ordinances somewhere in his Church; yet the Candlestick may be removed, and the Kindome of Heaven taken away from this or that particular place or Nation.

Use. The Use that I shall make of this Point is, to call you to this casting up of events that may fall out, to the end you may be able to justifie God if he turn his hand against you, and that you may for your own parts come to a center of resolution, that let God do what he will with your particular persons; yet you will serve the Lord, as in *Josua* 24. 19. When *Josua* had told the people, he is a jealous God, and a holy, he will not forgive your Transgressions and your sins, they answered, *Nay but we will serve the Lord*, and thereupon he set up a great stone for a witness, lest they should afterwards deny God: Let us set up such a stone of witness this day, that we may not turn away from the Lord our God, but ingage our selves to be his people for ever.

It is not my purpose to weaken the faith of the people of God, but to confirm their resolutions, nor to give the enemy any occasion to say; Now they stagger, they mistrust their

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cause, the wilderness hath shut them in; No, no, for whatsoever may become of our carcasses in this wilderness, though they may fall therein for our rebellions against, and temptations of God; yet for certain, *Israel* shall come into the Land of rest, for howsoever it be that Gods ways towards us be in the dark, yet his promises to the Church are in the cleer light. Our dry bones are not too dry to live again by his breath; Though he cary *Joseph* into a prison, it is but to advance him; Though he thrust *Jonas* into the Whales belly, it is but to save him. When the Ship is wrackt and broken, and the foundations (as the Psalmist saith) are destroyed, yet *ædificabo ecclesiam meam* will stand good against the very gates of Hell. And we may build upon it as a truth, that however his works of providence may seem to us, not to answer his Word of promise; yet all his dispensations towards his Churches, are in order to the fulfilling of his Promises, and the pangs of his Church are unto life, and not unto death; I say the pangs or throws of his Church, because I conceive, that these motions that are in Christendome, this renting of States and Kingdomes, is in order to some revolutions in the Churches; all these conspirations of stormy winds ingruent upon them are not for nothing: *Doth the plowman plow all the day to sow? doth he open and break the clods of his ground, when he hath made plain the face thereof? doth he not cast in the principal wheat, &c.* Isa. 28. 4 God will sow his Churches after his tearing them up by the plow; and therefore whatsoever Statsemen and Politicians may aime at, it is the Churches interest which the eye of God is upon, though they neither know nor intend it. As the Scripture taking notice of *Augustus* his Decree of taxing or enrolling the Empire or Provinces thereof, seems to give us the reason and occasion of bringing *Joseph* and *Mary* to *Bethlehem* (who were far off the place) that Christ might be born according to the Scriptures, which was a thing the Emperor never once dreamed of. God hath other ends and purposes in these shakings of Kingdomes and Provinces then Politicians and Statsemen have, therefore let us not discredit God by unbelief, for my Covenant is to me (saith he) *as the waters of Noah*, that is, my purpose to my people, to do them good is irreversible and absolute, *Isa.* 54. 10.

But then for our particulars: Though the waters of *Noah* return no more to cover the earth, yet such a House, City, Country may be overflowed and swallowed up with water; so may our Ark fall into Philistims hands; and therefore gather your selves together, search your selves Oh Nation, even Ye our worthy Senators, call your selves to account, and examine your selves strictly, impartially, humbly, lest the Babylonish garment and wedge of Gold (which causes *Israel* to fly before the men of *Ai*) be not in any of your Tents, search out carnal policy, lukewarmness towards God, Neutrality, private ends. It's not impossible but that there may be an *Absolom*, a *Shemei* in your own bowels, who if you were brought low, would drive you and the Ark of God too into the Wilderness, to seek a place. Oh let the representative body of the Kingdome keep themselves pure, that so if God should please to estimate, or measure out unto the Nation, according to the representative body of it, there may be mercy to it for your sakes. To this end, have an eye [I beseech you] upon obstructours and designers, which cannot do so much hurt in the enemies Army, as in your Counsels; Malignity thrust forth into the outward parts of the body, is nothing so dangerous, as that which lies close and neer to the heart or vitals: Speed the hearing of Causes which come before you, that men may be dismist to their commands and employments abroad to prevent a *vacuum*. Pity and relieve those that are broken and shipwrackt for the Kingdomes sake: have an eye upon your under-Instruments and Officers, that they spend you not more honour and reputation by their miscarriages, partialities, private gain: than they bring you in supplies; he that flies a sharp Hawk, rides hard after her, or else the Partridge will be half eaten before he come in; And fear not the losing of any party by doing Gods wil and work; for God himself should neither give rain nor fair weather; if he should please all sorts of men, I shall less stick on these things, because you were this day before put in mind of them; only let me press one thing more, namely; That you would countenance honest and godly men, with places of command and trust; *With command*, for they will be firm and valiant, *a mans valour lies in his conscience, and not in*

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his spirit: With trust, for such a man is like a door with two locks: He hath an obligation upon him both to God and you. Finally, do all that may be to suppress open and crying sins, for authority makes it self guilty of those, *other mens sins*, which it endeavours not to cut down, we in the Ministry must cry them down and you must cut them down, or else they become in guilt both ours and yours.

And let none of us say within our selves, we have strength for war, for *Eccles.* 11. 9. *The battel is not to the strong*. We have received many marks and tokens of favour from God, for *Josh.* 24. 19. *He will consume you after he hath done you good*. We are the *Israel* of God, to whom pertain the Promises, for *Josh.* 7. 8. *Israel flies before the Aliant*, We have the Ark of God in the Camp with us, for 1 *Sam.* 4, 10, 11. *The Philistims may take it*, We fast before the Lord and have a good cause for *Judg.* 20. 21. *Israel falls in the battel under Benjamin*. We are not so bad as the enemy that comes against us; *For it is not trusting to the sins of an enemy*. The worst bryars or thorns may serve for a rod in the land of God, to scourge his own people: We are Gods witnesses, for *Rev.* 11. 7. *The beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome and kill them*. In a word, the axe that cuts down the tree, is hafted with the wood of the same tree, the enemies power over us lies in our own sins, And so much for this Point.

David is resolved to be every way at Gods dispose, *Here am I*. A happy frame of spirit it is, to be able to perish, and resign our selves up to God for such a man shall be always in possession of himself, out of the gun-shot of all storms and tempests; steeled with courage and resolution; and however he be tossed too and fro, up and down, yet shall always light upon his feet. If *Canna* bring *Hannibal* to the very walls of *Rome*; If wave rise after wave, if Pillars be shaken, if rotten Boughs fall off the Tree with winds; if *Absolom* stir, *Israel* be up, *Shimei* curse, yet he is at this Point, *Here I am*. *Doct.* 4.

I have not much to say upon this Point, This is the sum. Do your duty and perish in it, *Si fractus illabatur orbis*, Conscience of sincerity, and uprightness of heart in duty, will make a man sing *Ecce ego*, Here am I. *Middle region men, and lower*

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to *Regimy* must be tossed and weather beaten, they live and have their treasure where winds and clouds, and waves come, but he is in the Serene, and above all these whose hope the Lord is, you may be sooner killed then hurt; and if God should deliver you up to the enemy, and bring in difficult times, be sure that there is few of them that hate you now, but would be ready to write upon the statue of each one of you that lives and dies faithful, *utinam viveres*; or if such days should come that men shall be afraid to name your names, or own your worth; yet as it was said of the Pictures of those Patriots that durst not come forth and appear in after times, *Eo magis fulgebant quia non videbantur*, they shined the more, because they were not to be seen. Be true to God, to his truth, it will save you: but if there be any of you that come in and adhere to God and his Cause only for shelter and safety, that is not thank-worthy with God, no man thanks another for being driven into his house to stand dry in a shower.

That you may be able to say *Here I am*, when God shal please to declare that he hath no delight in you, these things are requisite;

1. To have a good conscience on your side, that will feast you within doors, even when the hailstones rattle upon the tiles of the house; you know what *Luther* said when he was convented before the Emperor at *Wormes*, No winds shake the earth but those within it. If you be in a good cause, that is not all, for hypocrisie and base ends will more pull you down, than the goodness of the cause will lift you up.

It's a terrible thing to be hem'd in by the wrath of God on one side, and the galling of a guilty conscience on the other side. He that dare not face his own conscience must needs fly from the presence and sight of God, he cannot say *Here I am*.

2. A submissive faith to trust God, and leave your selves in his hand, accepting the punishment of your iniquity with silence and justification of God, lying down as patiently under his knife, as *Isaac* under *Abrahams*.

3. Acquaintance with God, so as to lay up your lives with Christ in God, having tasted his goodness to you in former experiences, such a man may be killed all but the head, but that's

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above the reach of any enemy, and though he be forsaken, yet he carries, *my God, my God*, with him, from the cross to his grave.

David states his happiness to consist in the fruition of God and his ordinances: *He will bring me again, and shew me his Ark, and the habitation of it.* He saith not, he will bring me to my house again, to my Concubines which are left behind, but he will shew me the Habitation, The Ark and the Temple were the things that he accounted worth the enjoying, and here you may observe what a godly heart looks at, not revenues and trading, but Gods Ark and habitation. The Roman Historians observe how the first seven Kings, did contribute to the State of *Rome*. *Romulus* the first gave it *esse*, then *Pompilius* the next, brought in the *forma*, Religion is indeed the very keel of the ship. The main work we have to do is to settle it, and it's our greatest wages, to see it established, it will pay us for all our layings out.

Let the same mind be in you, as was at this time in *David*, account it your happines, and the most lively mark of Gods favour to you, if he shall bring you again, and shew unto you his Ark and his Habitation, for therein lies the glory of *Israel*. I would the Reformation did not lie under an ill report with many amongst us. God would not bring the Isralites into *Canaan* whilst it was under an ill report with them by reason of the spies who undervalued it. It may cost us a longer march in this wilderness, if we look upon it with a scornful eye, and yet the prejudices against it, and the aspersions cast upon them whom you have set on work to be hewers in the Mountains to prepare the materials of the Temple, are many; and I fear the reason is, because *nothing that is one can please*, except it be a *quodlibit*; a grand sallet, it will not fit such variety of pallates as are amongst us, I pray God such a birth may be brought forth, as that there may remain no divisions or separation from us in conscience, but only in pride and affected singularity; there is the lesse regard to be had of such as are resolved aforehand, not to be fixed in the same or be with us, but like the erratick stars must each one have an oabe to himself. If any mans conscience lie (as I may so say) in his fancy, then to give liberty

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liberty to that, would be nothing else but to give him leave to be mad.

David expresses his sufferings, yea his utmost sufferings, by the phrase, *Good in Gods eyes*, *If he say thus, I delight not in thee, Here I am, let him do that is good in his eyes*: He might feel it evil, but if it be good in Gods eyes, he yields to it, and so let our hearts be humbled and framed in expectation of Gods hand to us at this time, that we may kiss the rod, and say with old *Eli*, when he heard the fall of his house: *It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good*, 1 Sam. 3. 18. We know not what Promises or Prophesies God hath given forth to his Church in his Word to be served and fulfilled by or upon our ruins. If God please not to honour himself by our labours, let him honour himself by our ashes.

FINIS.